ARROW COMICS

Fantastic Fanzine

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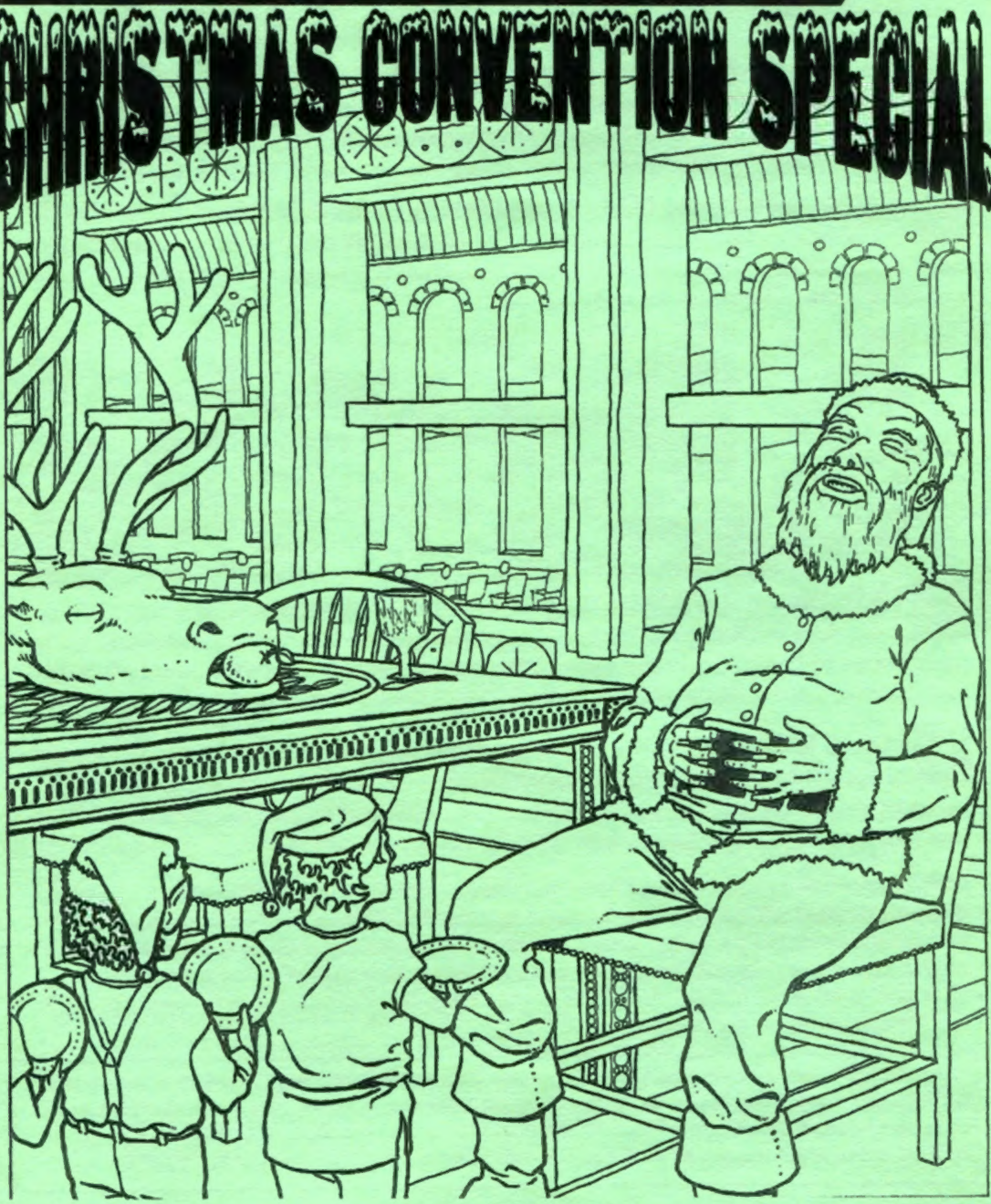
Celebrating Comics' Fantastic Fan Scene!

CHRISTMAS CONVENTION SPECIAL



Fantastic Fanzine

Celebrating Comics' Fantastic Fan Scene!

FANTASTIC FANZINE is dedicated to promoting local comic artists, writers, publishers, conventioneers and most especially fans. We invite you to join the newest community of comic book fandom.

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL #1

DECEMBER	2005
Ralph Griffith	Publisher
Stuart Kerr	Editor

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1 **THE SNOOP** With his usual brand of wit, The Snoop gives his take on the current state of the comics market. Come sample his unique view on current hot topics on comics trends, movies, and creators. Agree or disagree, you're sure to come away with a different perspective.

2 **MOTOR CITY COMIC CON** Arrow alums Ralph Griffith and Stuart Kerr attend the bi-annual Motor City Comic Con and take a walk down Memory Lane with a brief history of the premiere comic book convention in Michigan. There was a lot to see and do and buy. Check out some of the sights.

5 **FIRST ANNUAL ZAP INDEPENDENT COMIC CREATORS SHOW** From Novi to Dearborn, Ralph and Stu head over to this first of (hopefully) many more shows to come. Come see some of the best comics you've never heard of! Here's just a taste of some of the many talented comics creators in Detroit and the Midwest.

8 **LOCAL SPOTLIGHT** The promotors of the Zap show are also the proud owners of GREEN BRAIN COMICS in dearborn. Ralph takes us on a tour of this very popular local shop and introduces us to Dan and Kate Merritt. They are big promotors of independent comics and have a wide variety of wares to check out.

*Well, 2005 is coming to an end and we're celebrating with this **FANTASTIC FANZINE CONVENTION/CHRISTMAS SPECIAL**. Special thanks go out to this issue's cover artist **Brian Cote** from Holland Michigan. Did you notice what's on Santa's Christmas table? Ho ho ho! We're still looking for more input from you the reader, and what better time than with Fantastic Fanzine's First Issue coming out in 2006. And if you're wondering how it can be our first issue, just check out the numbering on the previous three!*

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The SNOOP'S

Headlines and Views on the Latest Comic News!!!

COMING IN 2006: 1985? One of Marvels current hottest writers, Mark Millar is writing 1985, a project that will cost Marvel "millions of dollars" to produce, using nearly 100 actors in costumes and digital special effects. The project started shooting in an "an "American desert location" last week. No, this is not a movie. It will be a comic in the old Fumetti style, but with modern techniques. Much like Roto-scoping was a way to put live actors into and animated format, Fumetti uses actual people and backgrounds used to create comic book panels and pages. The story revolves around a young Midwestern lad who begins to see Marvel super villains appearing in his home town. Will it be a ground-breaker or just a novelty? We'll see in about six months. Check back with the Snoop then for a review.

WILL WE BE WATCHING THE WATCHMEN? It didn't come out from Universal. It didn't come out from Paramount. Now Warner Brothers is giving it a shot. The Alan Moore/Dave Gibbons graphic novel was originally published by DC in 1987 and met with unprecedented critical and commercial success. According to The Hollywood Reporter, Warner Brothers is looking for writers and talking to directors. The Snoop would love to see a faithful movie version of this modern classic of comics. Then again, writer Alan Moore doesn't want his name attached to the project and that gives this old dog cause for concern. He also had his name removed from the upcoming film version of his and David Lloyd's V for Vendetta (also produced by Warner Brothers), due in theaters on March 17th. Could be the Stephen King effect, eh?

TOP COMICS ACCORDING TO THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN. I don't usually look at the numbers, but once in a while I'm curious. Who's on top? Who's sliding off the charts? Unsurprisingly, Marvel and DC still dominate, but it doesn't seem all that long ago that upstart Image was poised to topple at least one of the Big Two from their throne. They now control less than four percent of the comics market, just behind third place Dark Horse. TokyoPop and VIZ, two Manga publishers, are close behind with nearly three percent each. While Japanese influence has had a place in the American comics market for a few decades now, it's interesting to note how close these companies are on the heels of the once-mighty Image. The market should make the $350 million mark by the end of the year, with trade paperbacks/graphic novels continuing to be the industry's biggest area of growth.

October Convention Bonanza

by Stuart Kerr

Fantastic Fanzine correspondents Ralph Griffith and myself recently made appearances at two great local comic shows. The semi-annual Motor City ComicCon made its debut at the all-new Rock Financial Showplace on October 15-16; and the First Annual Zap Independent Comic Producers show at Dearborn's Al Matta Hall added a new element to an already thriving Detroit comic book community.

Anyone reading this article must be familiar with Michael Goldman's Motor City show. Growing from a handful of neighborhood hall shows each year, Goldman started the Motor City Con at the Dearborn Civic Center in the early nineties. Each show was progressively better than the last, adding to a core of comic books and related items. From the beginning you could meet a plethora of regional artists showing their wares and doing original works for as low as five to ten bucks. How many Wolverine sketches came out of this show over the years and several incarnations? If there were figures on such a statistic I'd not be surprised if it were in the five figures. There were also a handful of professional comic artists, including local heroes Arvell Jones, Terry Austin and William Messner-Loebs.

I can only assume that Michael Goldman was and is a man of vision. Looking back over the evolution of the Motor City Con, one can see the seeds of everything he is doing with the show now all the way back to the beginnings. This past October you could meet such pop culture notables as ST:TNG's Levar Burton and wrestler Rob Van Dam, along with models and local artists. Not to mention a veritable Who's Who of Arrow Comics stars. Guy Davis, Vince Locke, Randy Zimmerman, Susan Van Camp, Scott Rosema and of course my good

friend Mark Bloodworth. There was even an appearance by one of the original Arrow crew, Tim Dzon of Realm inking fame, who recently moved back to Michigan from exotic ports.

It wouldn't behoove me to forget two other pioneers in the Detroit area convention scene, both of whom played precursor roles to the current empire. Michael Lester, owner of Time Travellers comic store in Redford promoted a series of local hall shows in the seventies and eighties. Many of our current crop of shop owners got their start as dealers in the Knights of Columbus and San Souci Hall shows two or three decades ago. These shows played an important role in developing and maintaining a healthy comic book market in this area. Retailers, if you think a big show in town takes money out of your pockets, think again. It's like the Super Bowl coming to town, a big time visibility lift for the whole area. How often do comic book shops make an appearance on local TV?

Around the same time, a popular book-slash-comic store opened in Westland. Readers Exchange was a big, bright store that catered to readers, not just people who liked to look at pictures of men in tights and capes. The book section was large, including an ever-expanding section devoted to the then new graphic novel format. Owner Gary Reed was definitely ahead of the curve on that call. He also organized a series of big venue shows, the King Kons, featuring comic book dealers, local artists and panel discussion rooms. Reed went on to form Caliber Comics, resurrecting Arrow's Realm and Deadworld series when Arrow fell to the Black and White Bust. Some of Caliber's alums include Jim O'Barr, Brian Bendis and David Mack.

Arrow alum Vince Locke was on hand sketching and signing copies of DEADWORLD #1 from Image Comics.

Guy Davis (the comic book artist, not the jazz musician) was seen critiquing an aspiring artist's portfolio.

Scott Parrish (right) gives an enthusiastic introduction to Mark Bloodworth (left, duh). Mark just received news that Fantastic Fanzine needs another cover!

Comics? No this guy doesn't have any comics. He does have one of the finest displays of replica weaponry around. Any one of these pieces would look cool on the living room wall.

But I digress. The fall show is only two days and is typically the smaller of the two Motor City Cons. I think the move from Novi Convention Center to Rock Financial Showplace hurt the show, although it wasn't a voluntary move since the old convention site is to be torn down or turned into warehousing or something. Attendance seemed a bit down, a temporary blip as local and regional visitors grow familiar with the new location and facilities. Nonetheless, there was an impressive guest list and numerous vendors with a wide variety of wares. You could buy a replica of a Klingon Batlak , a twenty five year old Luke Skywalker action figure (still in the box), statues of super heroes' *dogs*, copies of the most obscure manga imaginable (some with English subtitles), one of several thousand T-shirt designs, movie posters, buttons, stickers and yes, even comics.

A veritable mountain of T-shirts could be found. You could spend an hour just checking out all the different designs.

Oh yeah, you could find *comics* at the show, too!

Michael Goldman's own selection of wares shows off one of the premiere comic collections in the midwest. Dozens of other store owners and regional dealers had impressive displays as well, each one seeking its own particular niche in a competitive marketplace. I noted a nice selection of undergrounds, magazine and digest sized books, posters, Golden and Sil-

ver Age books, new Marvel and DC titles, new titles from a wide range of comic publishers, both big and small, and independent creators with their own self-published books. Every one we talked to at the show seemed happy with the number of people who visited their displays and quite often with the number of rubles that exchanged hands.

Hey, check out the Fantastic Fanzine display at the Arrow Comics table. Randy Zimmerman, current publisher of the Arrow Comics line and creator of SPANK THE MONKEY, was on hand through out the weekend.

You can find current information about all the Goldman-run shows at motorcityconventions.com. Check out the guest list for the three day spring show. It's a Batman reunion with Adam West, Burt Ward and Yvonne Craig. Your ticket in also gets you a handful of nice promotional freebies including posters, buttons and stickers. Always on a first come first served basis, mind you, and the good stuff goes fast, but there's always something even on the second or third day.

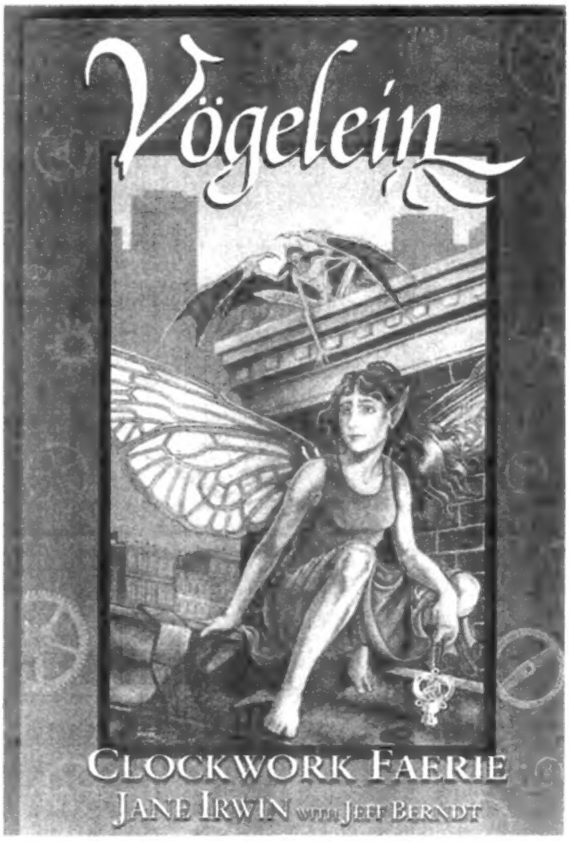
A much smaller show, but one that drew guests from several states was the premiere of Green Brain comic shop's **Zap Independent Comic Creators** show. Shop owners Dan and Kate Merritt have promoted independent producers at their store for some time. Expanding that idea into an annual celebration of the talented but little known self-published writers and artists who are the future of our beloved medium was the next logical step. These are the folk with the passion and commitment to back their ideas with both their time and their money to put out a product they personally believe in. Some are trying to break into mainstream comics or create a property they can sell to a movie studio. Others are making a statement about a particular cause. Some just want to see their work in print. Some are commercial and some are eclectic. Regardless of these creators' ultimate goals or expectations of success, they are doing it!

Dan and Kate have their own appearance in this issue in Local Spotlight, so I'll let you read more about them and their Dearborn store in that

CYNICALMAN and ANTI-SOCIALMAN creator Matt Feazell was his usual accessible self and spoke to many long-time fans while offering dozens of his many mini-comic titles for pittances. Hope you picked up a few!

column. Here I'll stick with thoughts about Zap.

There were thirty exhibitors at the Al Matta Hall a couple blocks from the Green Brain storefront. It was a sell-out. The promoters are working on a new layout to try to add additional display space without overcrowding. While I enjoyed the great burger and fries from the hall's kitchen, I hope the show's success pushes them into a larger venue in years to come. Ralph and I spent about four hours perusing and conversing for a minimal cover charge, but I'd pay a couple dollars more for a larger number of tables. I'm sure this show will grow due to the passion level alone. If you missed the first one, keep your eyes peeled for the next.



The Grand Poopah of Detroit Indie publishing is **Matt Feazell**. If you haven't seen Matt Feazell or one of his minicomics, then you've never been to a local comic show. It takes genius to create critically acclaimed work using stick figures. According to Feazell's website, he "started drawing stick figure superhero comics in Junior High School study hall like everybody else." At one time aspiring to work for Marvel or Heavy Metal, he created a new path for himself moving back toward minimilistic stick figure characters. The first was the Amazing

Photogenic Jane Irwin displays original art as well as copies of her self-published, squarebound graphic novel VÖGELEIN. Jane gets a Fantastic Fanzine recommendation.

Cynicalman. He also made a regular appearance in Scott McClouds ZOT by Eclipse Comics. He is currently working on The Death of Antisocialman, a 96-page minicomic graphic novel with writer Walt Lockley. Check out the catalog on Matt's website. Each chapter is one minicomic and the whole story will run 12 chapters when it is finished. Chapters 1-11 are currently available in Matt's catalog.

Vögelein is a squarebound fantasy tale by **Jane Irwin**, who specializes in illustrations of all kinds. Jane's work appears in many different places, including children's books, web sites, album covers, book covers, fine art shows and now her own self-published comic book series Vogelein. You can check her out at Vogelein.com.

Michealangelo Cicerone diplayed his wares, featuring his character Ozone Jones. He has a very nice Disney-esque style...with a twist. We'd love to spotlight this creator in an upcoming issue of Fantastic Fanzine (hint, hint). Mike was very personable and had a number of publications and pinups at his table. I'm sure we'll be seeing him at the next Zap show, and who knows where else in the near future.

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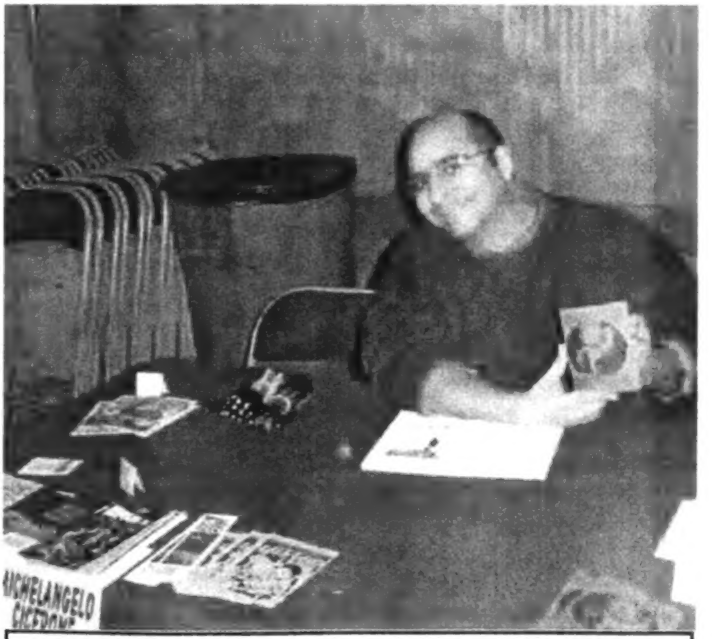

With a name like Michealangelo Cicerone, it has to be good. The OZONE JONES creator introduces fans to his creations.

Local Fan Spotlight!!!

Ah, Christmas, and keeping with the colors of the season, I guess it's time to drop in over at **"Green" Brain Comic** shop located at 13210 Michigan Ave., Dearborn, MI., (313) 582-9444. Some of you old time collectors may remember the "Comics Plus" store back in the early 90's. Current owners Dan and Katie Merritt bought out the original owner Gary Reed in 1999, changed the name, and moved the store to its current location.

Their store is all about comics! Forget the toys, card games, and all that fluff. This store is all about comics, fandom and promoting local creators. Dan and Katie put together the inaugural SNAP independent comics show featured earlier this issue. They even have a section devoted to "Mini-Comics" pictured here. The store has the widest selection of independents comics I've ever encountered. No matter how obscure the title or publisher, odds are this store will have it!

They offer a customer pull service, participate in "Free Comic Day" and "24 Hour Comic Day". As a special bonus they are also currently offering up to 60% off selected back issues. So get that moola ready! Infinite Crisis, Justice, and most of the House of "M" titles have been the store's top sellers recently.

Katie Merritt smiling behind the counter at Green Brain Comics. You want friendly service? Katie and Dan are always happy to assist you.

Store operator Katie (Dan wasn't there when I stumbled through) said that readers might be missing out on Dark Horse Book's collected Concrete trades, Image's Walking Dead, Arsenic Lullaby from Douglas Paszkiewicz, and Finder by Carla Speed McNiel.

If you are traveling through Dearborn you have to check this store out. Dan and Katie are always ready to answer any questions you might have and you'll just have to trust me when I say they have something for everyone.

COMIC CONTACTS

* Big Ben's Comics	8241 Allen Rd.	Allen Park	(313) 382-0700
* Comics Rox Collectibles	19190 Eureka Rd	Southgate	(734) 324-3160
* Galaxy Comics	2620 State	Saginaw	(989) 799-6334
* Green Brain Comics	13210 Michigan Ave.	Dearborn	(313) 582-9444
* Pack Shack	23565 Van Born Rd.	Taylor	(313) 299-0550
* WonderWorld Comics	22391 Ecorse Rd.	Taylor	(313) 292-8697
A To Z Cards & Comics	32659 Ford. Rd.	Garden City	(734) 425-6780
Back To The Past	27512 Schoolcraft	Livonia	(734) 261-5411
Comics Archives, Inc.	25650 Plymouth	Redford	(313) 937-8860
Comic City	42823 Ford. Rd.	Canton	(734) 981-3561
Time Travelers	3277 W. 12 Mile Rd.	Berkley	(248) 548-7213

**** Fantastic Fanzine available at these stores!!!***

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Nearly as venerable in his own way as Matt Feazell, **George McVey** has been a mainstay of the local con circuit for (dare I say it?) *decades*. He worked on a couple Arrow books in the early days. That's Arrow 1.0 for those of you have visited arrowcomics.com. Currently George is running Gem Studios. A prolific producer of digest-sized publications, George has unmatched energy and enthusiasm for this crazy business. Check out his table and see for yourself. Or email him at *render4you@yahoo.com*.

SUPPORT LOCAL COMIC SHOWS!

I swear this guy looks just the same as he did twenty years ago! Hamtramck native and local self-publishing guru George McVey shows his stuff.

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